CLAIMS

1. An information processing apparatus characterized by comprising:

managing means for managing first functional generation information as functional information of software stored in a memory;

obtaining means for obtaining second functional generation information as functional information of software registered in an information providing apparatus via a network on a basis of said first functional generation information;

comparing and determining means for comparing said first functional generation information and said second functional generation information with each other and determining newest functional generation information; and

information updating means for, when said comparing and determining means determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, updating said first functional generation information to said second functional generation information.

2. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterized by further comprising passage determining means for determining whether a predetermined

time has passed on a basis of said first functional generation information,

wherein when said passage determining means determines that said predetermined time has passed, said obtaining means obtains said second functional generation information registered in said information providing apparatus via said network.

3. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterized by further comprising software updating means for updating the software stored in said memory using software corresponding to said second functional generation information when said comparing and determining means determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information.

4. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, characterized by further comprising function determining means for determining whether said software has a function corresponding to said second functional generation information when said comparing and determining means determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information,

wherein when said function determining means

determines that said software does not have the function corresponding to said second functional generation information, said software updating means updates the software stored in said memory using the software corresponding to said second functional generation information.

5. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, characterized by further comprising:

medium determining means for determining whether a recording medium is loaded; and

reading means for reading third functional generation information as functional generation of software recorded on said recording medium when said medium determining means determines that said recording medium is loaded;

wherein said comparing and determining means compares said third functional generation information as well as said first functional generation information and said second functional generation information with each other and determines newest functional generation information;

said information updating means updates said first functional generation information to said newest functional generation information; and

said software updating means updates the software stored in said memory using software corresponding to said newest functional generation information.

6. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that:

when said obtaining means does not obtain said second functional generation information via said network, said comparing and determining means compares said first functional generation information and said third functional generation information with each other, and determines said newest functional generation information.

7. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that:

when said comparing and determining process determines that said second functional generation information and said third functional generation information are identical with each other, said information updating means updates said first functional generation information to said third functional generation information; and

said software updating means updates the software stored in said memory using software corresponding to said third functional generation information.

8. An information processing method characterized

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by comprising:

an obtaining step for obtaining second functional generation information as functional information of software registered in an information providing apparatus via a network on a basis of first functional generation information as functional information of software stored in a memory;

a comparing and determining step for comparing said first functional generation information and said second functional generation information with each other and determining newest functional generation information; and

an information updating step for, when it is determined by a process of said comparing and determining step that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, updating said first functional generation information to said second functional generation information.

9. A recording medium on which a computer readable program is recorded, said program characterized by comprising:

an obtaining step for obtaining second functional generation information as functional information of software registered in an information providing apparatus

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via a network on a basis of first functional generation information as functional information of software stored in a memory;

a comparing and determining step for comparing said first functional generation information and said second functional generation information with each other and determining newest functional generation information; and

an information updating step for, when it is determined by a process of said comparing and determining step that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, updating said first functional generation information to said second functional generation information.

10. A program characterized by making a computer perform a process comprising:

an obtaining step for obtaining second functional generation information as functional information of software registered in an information providing apparatus via a network on a basis of first functional generation information as functional information of software stored in a memory;

a comparing and determining step for comparing said first functional generation information and said second

functional generation information with each other and

determining newest functional generation information; and

an information updating step for, when it is

determined by a process of said comparing and determining

step that said second functional generation information

is newer than said first functional generation

information, updating said first functional generation

information to said second functional generation

information.